

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 MMO-01

EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02 AGR-05

AID-05 CIAE-00 COM-02 DODE-00 FEA-01 NSC-05

TRSY-02 USIA-06 /090 W

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R 311420Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9049

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 TANANARIVE 0590

FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, MA

SUBJECT: PARM - ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT - PART I

REFS: (A) STATE 038356, (B) STATE 038338, (C) STATE 050086,

(D) CERP 0001

1. POLICY ASSESSMENT

A. US INTERESTS. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT US INTEREST IN MADAGASCAR IS THE DENIAL OF ITS REAL ESTATE AND PORTS TO UNFRIENDLY FORCES. THE COUNTRY'S POSITION ASTRIDE THE SUPER-TANKER ROUTE AROUND SOUCH AFRICA WOULD ENABLE AIR AND NAVAL FORCES BASED IN MADAGASCAR TO POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO CONTINUED MIDDLE EAST OIL SHIPMENTS TO WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US, MORE SO THAN HOSTILE BASES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

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THE MERE EXISTENCE OF THIS THREAT, EVEN IF NOT IMPLEMENTED, COULD HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON THE SECURITY OF OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES. THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTEMPTS BEING MADE TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A THREATENING SITUATION IS SET FORTH IN THE PREPARATORY DOCUMENTS FOR PARM (REF B PARA 7B, AND REF C PARA 7), AND THE ODDS IN FAVOR OF SUCH A MOVE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE RECENTLY INCREASED JUDGING FROM THE DIPLOMATIC

ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE IN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA.
CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES CONTINUES
TO BE A "BEDROCK OF OUR FOXUBN POLICZ" (REF B PARA 6A).

OTHER US INTERESTS ARE RELATIVELY MINOR. IN THE
BILATERAL FIELD THEY INCLUDE CONTINUED ACCESS TO MALAGASY
MINERALS SUCH AS GRAPHITE AND CHROMITE, AND THE OPPORTUNITY
TO PARTAKE IN THE STUDY OF SOME OF MADAGASCAR'S UNIQUE
ATTRIBUTES IN THE FIELDS OF NATURAL SCIENCE AND GEOLOGY.
OTHER INTERESTS ARE OF A UNIVERSAL NATURE, SUCH AS TRADE,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, ETC.,
AND ARE PURSUED ON A WORLD-WIDE BASIS, ALTHOUGH THE PROMOTION
OF US EXPORTS TO MADAGASCAR IS PARTICULARLY PERTINENT IN
VIEW OF THE PRESENT TRADE IMBALANCE: 1975 US IMPORTS FROM:
DOLS 46 MILLION; 1975 EXPORTS TO : DOLS 9 MILLION. THE GEOGRAPHIC
ISOLATION OF MADAGASCAR AND ITS ETHNIC UNIQUENESS FURTHER
REDUCE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR MINOR
INTERESTS, AS THEY MINIMIZE ANY RIPPLE EFFECT INTO OTHER
COUNTRIES OF LOCAL US SUCCESSES OR GAINS, IN SPITE OF AN
EMBRYONIC SENSE OF INDIAN OCEAN COMMUNITY.

B. OVERVIEW. SUCCESSIVE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT SINCE
1972 HAVE MADE IT THEIR STATED OBJECTIVE TO REDUCE
MADAGASCAR'S PREVIOUS CLOSE TIES WITH THE WEST AND TO
BECOME A STRICTLY NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY. TO THIS END THEY
HAVE DILIGENTLY FOSTERED INCREASED POLITICAL, ECONOMIC,
CULTURAL, AND SCIENTIFIC TIES WITH COUNTRIES OF THE
COMMUNIST WORLD. THESE INCREASED TIES TO THE EAST HAVE
BEEN MATCHED BY MOVES TO LOOSEN WESTERN CONNECTIONS.

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THIS HAS AFFECTED PRIMARILY FRANCE AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT,
THE US. FRENCH BUSINESSES, PREVIOUSLY DOMINANT IN THE
ECONOMY, HAVE LARGELY BEEN NATIONALIZED AND FRENCH
MILITARY FORCES PREVIOUSLY STATIONED IN MADAGASCAR EX-
PELLED. THE ONLY SIZEABLE US BUSINESSES IN MADAGASCAR,
CALTEX AND ESSO, HAVE HAD THEIR ASSETS NATIONALIZED, AND
THE NASA TRACKING STATION, IN OPERATION SINCE 1964, WAS
CLOSED BY THE DRM (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR) IN JULY 1975.

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FOR POLADS

THE MAIN QUESTION IS WHETHER THIS MOVEMENT FROM WEST TO EAST WILL STOP AT DEAD CENTER, OR AT LEAST SHORT OF A POSITION WHICH WOULD INCLUDE MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH THE USSR. ALTHOUGH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY PRESIDENT DIDIER RATSIRAKA, IS THE MOST RADICAL ONE YET, IT STILL REMAINS THE STATED POLICY OF THE DRM, ALTHOUGH ENTHUSIASTICALLY SOCIALIST INTERNALLY, TO REMAIN NONALIGNED, PRACTICING A "TOUS AZIMUTS" FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY; THAT IS, RESISTING DOMINATION FROM ANY QUARTER. RATSIRAKA IS ALSO A PRO- PONENT OF THE "INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE" CONCEPT, ALTHOUGH HE HAS NEVER ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXISTENCE OF SOVIET FACILITIES IN SOMALIA. IN ADDITION TO ORDERING OUR FRENCH FORCES, HE HAS BANNED ALL FOREIGN MILITARY VISITS. YET THE MOMENTUM OF HIS MOVEMENT TOWARD THE EAST AND ITS EXPLOITATION BY THE SOVIETS MIGHT CARRY HIM TO A POINT IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM BEYOND THAT WHICH HE
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PRESENTLY ENVISAGES.

IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT RATSIRAKA'S PROFESSED YEARNING TO BE EXACTLY IN THE MIDDLE IS NOT SINCERE AND THAT HE IS PREPARED TO MOVE TOWARD A SOMALIA-TYPE SITUATION. THE SOVIETS HAVE PRESENTED ONE MILITARY HELICOPTER TO HIM AS A GIFT, COMPLETE WITH CREW, AND ARE ABOUT TO SELL HIM ANOTHER. THERE ARE UNVERIFIED RUMORS THAT THEY MAY ALREADY HAVE HIS AGREEMENT FOR CONTINGENCY USE OF MADAGASCAR'S FORMER FRENCH BASE AND NORTHERN PORT OF DIEGO SUAREZ. IF

RATSIRAKA DELIBERATELY MOVES TOWARD A POSITION OF MILITARY DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR, IT WILL BE FOR PERSONAL, IDEOLOGICAL, OR GEOPOLITICAL REASONS; HE CANNOT USE THE ARGUMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY, AS THERE EXISTS NO EXTERNAL THREAT TO MADAGASCAR.

US POLICY TOWARD THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF RESTRAINT IN THE FIELDS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS, COMBINED WITH A VERY ACTIVE PROGRAM IN CULTURAL RELATIONS. WE HAVE REACTED TO A SERIES OF SLIGHTS, WHICH HAS INCLUDED ANTI-US GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND THE UNEXPLAINED EXPULSION OF US DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, AS WELL AS THE ACTIONS AGAINST NASA AND THE OIL COMPANIES, BY NOT INITIATING ANY NEW AID AGREEMENTS, BY WITHDRAWING AN AMBASSADORIAL NOMINATION, AND BY EXPELLING A MALAGASY DIPLOMAT FROM WASHINGTON. IN SPITE OF ITS ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC AND EELIBERATE ANTAGONISM TOWARD THE US, THE DRM HAS PERMITTED OUR CULTURAL CENTER TO CONTINUE ITS SUBSTANTIAL PROGRAM OF PERSONAL EXCHANGES AND CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS, THE LATTER BEING EXTREMELY APPRECIATED IN THIS RATHER STAIID AND SOCIALLY-INACTIVE CAPITAL.

ALTHOUGH RESULTING FROM OUR POOR BILATERAL RELATIONS, WE FEEL THAT OUR POSTURE OF VISIBLE DISAPPROVAL FOR SOME OF THE ACTIONS OF THE PRESENT REGIME COULD HAVE THE SALUTARY EFFECT OF MAKING IT MORE CAUTIOUS IN DEVELOPING CLOSER
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RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST WORLD. AT THE SAME TIME THE "BREATH OF FRESH AIR" PROVIDED BY THE AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IS A REMINDER TO THE POPULATION IN THE CAPITAL OF SOME OF THE MORE ATTRACTIVE ASPECTS OF MODERN WESTERN LIFE FROM WHICH THEY COULD BECOME ESTRANGED BY GOING TOO FAR ALONG THE PRESENT PATH.

I MUST NOTE HERE THAT SOME OF THE ESTERN DIPLOMATS IN THIS CAPITAL BELIEVE COOLNESS ON OUR PART AND LACK OF US SUPPORT MAY FORCE RATSIRAKA TO DEPEND ALL THE MORE ON THE COMMUNISTS- I DISAGREE WITH THIS VIEW, IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OUR MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS MALAGASY GOVERNMENTS WAS ALWAYS SMALL IN PROPORTION TO WHAT THEY CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. OUR POLICY HAS MORE OF A SYMBOLIC VALUE THAN A REAL PRACTICAL EFFECT ON THE HOST GOVERNMENT: IT IS A SILENT WARNING OF THE POSSIBLE END RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT COURSE OF ACTION.

C. OBJECTIVES, COURSES OF ACTION, AND ISSUES. OUR INTEREST IN THE DENIAL OF MADAGASCAR TO UNFRIENDLY FORCES WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY A CLOSER US-MALAGASY BILATERAL

RELATIONSHIP. THIS WOULD HOPEFULLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY OR
PRODUCE A GREATER MALAGASY AWARENESS OF THE PERILS
PRESENTED BY AN OVERLY-CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE
COMMUNISTS, THUS DIMINISHING THE POSSIBILITY OF EVENTUAL
MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH THE USSR.

THE HISTORY OF THE MALAGASY-US RELATIONSHIP AND THE
TRIGINS AND CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT ARE SUCH
THAT OUR OBJECTIVES MUST BE CAST IN MODEST ERMS; THE
SAME FACTORS LIMIT THE COURSES OF ACTION WE CAN UNDERTAKE
TO ACHIEVE THEM. WITHOUT THE BURDEN OF THE PAST, A CLOSE
AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP COULD BE PURSUED THROUGH
TRADITIONAL AMERICAN MEANS: ASSURANCES OF GOOD INTENTIONS,
OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE, READINESS TO COOPERATE, ETC. IN
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VIEW OF WHAT HAS PASSED, HOWEVER, WE CAN ONLY EXPECT TO
OBTAIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE A GRUDGING RESPECT AND AN
IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE IN OUR WORKING RELATIONS, TO BETTER
ENABLE US TO HANDLE BILATERAL PROBLEMS AND TO MAKE OUR
VIEWS KNOWN MORE EFFECTIVELY ON VARIOUS MATTERS OF
INTEREST TO US, INCLUDING THE SITUATION IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN AND MADAGASCAR' POSITION IN IT.

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TRSY-02 USIA-06 /091 W
-----010455Z 121187 /22

R 311420Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
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THE COURSES OF ACTION WHICH ARE BEST CALCULATED TO PURSUE THESE OBJECTIVES FOLLOW FROM THE POLICY CITED ABOVE. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE OUR WILLINGNESS TO HAVE BETTER RELATIONS, BUT ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT MUST MEET US HALFWAY. FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE THIS CAN BEST BE DONE BY CONTINUING TO WORK FOR EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE BILATERAL ISSUES BETWEEN US. FOR THE LONG RUN, WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT A CONSISTENTLY-IMPROVED MALAGASY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US WOULD PERMIT, IN TIME, A RETURN TO A MORE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP, TO INCLUDE, INTER ALIA, THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR AND NEW BILATERAL AID PROJECTS. THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONE-SIDED SOLUTIONS TO OUR BILATERAL ISSUES OR A PREMATURE RESTORATION OF NORMAL RELATIONS IN RESPONSE TO MINOR CONCILIATORY GESTURES CAN ONLY ADD CONTEMPT TO THE DISTRUST WHICH PRESENTLY CHARACTERIZES THE MALAGASY ATTITUDE TOWARD US. IN THE MEANTIME, OUR ACTIVE CULTURAL PROGRAM WILL CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE

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STRATE THAT THERE IS A SOUND BASIS FOR GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, REGARDLESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS. SIMILARLY, OUR SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL AND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS ACTIVE IN MADAGASCAR, UNDP, WHO, CRS, IBRD, CAN BE CITED AS EVIDENCE OF OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MADAGASCAR AND TO OUR INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF ITS POPULATION.

THE MOST IMPORTANT BILATERAL ISSUES AT THIS TIME CONCERN THE NASA STATION, THE COMPENSATION TO NATIONALIZED AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES, AND THE SPORADIC BUT RECURRING POOR TREATMENT OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE NASA ISSUE MAY TAKE TIME TO RESOLVE. IT INCLUDES DEMANDS FOR BACKRENT AND FOR THE DISPOSITION OF THE STATION'S PROPERTY; DRM PRIDE IS ALSO HEAVILY INVOLVED, AS THE TAKEOVER OF THE STATION WAS ONE OF RATSIRAKA'S FIRST ACTIONS UPON HIS ACCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCY. COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED ASSETS MAY ALSO TAKE A LONG TIME, AS IT COULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL OUTPAYMENTS FROM THE DRM'S STRAPPED TREASURY, TO BOTH AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FIRMS. THE TREATMENT OF AMERICANS, HOWEVER, COULD BE QUICKLY AND SIMPLY IMPROVED BY A POLICY DECISION TO STOP THE NEEDLESS MINOR HARASSMENT OF PRIVATE AMERICANS, EITHER RESIDENT OR IN TRANSIT, TO REFRAIN FROM THE ARBITRARY REJECTION OF PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL AMERICAN VISA REQUESTS, AND TO PROCEED

FORTHWITH WITH THE TRIAL OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WHO
HAS BEEN HELD IN JAIL FOR TWO MONTHS WITHOUT THE OPPORTUNITY
TO PUT UP BAIL.

A SATISFACTORY HANDLING OF THESE ISSUES AND A CONTINUA-
TION OF THE PRESENTLY-IMPROVING TREND IN GOVERNMENT MEDIA
TREATMENT OF THE US WOULD INDICATE A NEW MALAGASY ATTITUDE
AND WOULD HOPEFULLY PAVE THE WAY FOR A BETTER UNDERSTAND-
ING OF OUR VIEWS ON MORE WIDE-RANGING ISSUES SUCH AS
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES,
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AND SOME OF THE OTHER MULTILATERAL TOPICS SET FORTH IN
REFS B AND C. EVENTUALLY, NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS MIGHT
EVEN BE FOLLOWED BY A RESUMPTION OF US NAVAL VISITS,
ALTHOUGH PROBABLY IN TANDEM WITH SOVIET VISITS IN THE NAME
OF NON-ALIGNMENT.

THE ABOVE COURSES OF ACTION HAVE BEEN FORMULATED ON
THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE WILL BE DEALING FOR SOME TIME WITH
THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA, WHOSE PARTY HAS JUST
WON A THUMPING VICTORY IN LOCAL ELECTONS. BUT THE
ELEMENT OF RESERVE THEY CONTAIN TOWARD THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT
WOULD ALSO PLACE US IN A GOOD POSITION TO ESTABLISH GOOD
RELATIONS WITH A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT WERE RATSIRAKA TO BE
REPLACED IN THE NEAR FUTURE BY A MORE MODERATE REGIME.

THE ONLY EARLY DECISIONS REQUIRED FROM WASHINGTON WILL
CONCERN THE TACTICS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER NASA, AS NEW
MALAGASY OFFERS OR COUNTEROFFERS ARE RECEIVED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, PARM REPORTS, ANNUAL REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TANANA00590
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770111-0745
Format: TEL
From: TANANARIVE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977031/aaaaaanv.tel
Line Count: 367
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 508907ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 38356, 77 STATE 38338, 77 STATE 50086
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2932125
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARM - ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT - PART I
TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, MA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/508907ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009